

The Consumer Protection Unit is part of the State Department of Justice Fraud and Consumer Protection Division. The Division was created by Attorney General Brady, and is comprised of the Consumer Protection Unit, the Securities Unit, the Fraud in Government Programs Unit and the Special Investigations Unit.

The Consumer Protection Unit is responsible for the investigation of consumer complaints and the enforcement of consumer laws, including the Consumer Fraud Act and the Deceptive Trade Practices Act. It is responsible for initiating both civil and criminal prosecution against violators of consumer protection laws. Both businesses and consumers rely upon the Consumer Protection Unit for help with a variety of consumer issues. The Unit also provides informal mediation services in an effort to resolve disputes without litigation. Another important objective of the Consumer Protection Unit is to provide community outreach and educational services on issues of public concern including consumer tips and advice, press releases warning the public of consumer scams or frauds and presentations to consumer and civic groups.

Anyone with a consumer concern, or with a desire to obtain more information on consumer laws, is invited to call the Attorney General's Consumer Protection Unit at:

1-800-220-5424
Outside Delaware
302-577-8600



ATTORNEY GENERAL
Joseph R. "Beau" Biden III

Consumer Protection Unit
800-220-5424

New Castle County:
820 N. French St., 5th floor
Wilmington, DE 19801
Phone: (302) 577-8600

Kent County:
102 W. Water Street, Suite 2
Dover, DE 19904
Phone: (302) 739-7641

Sussex County:
114 E. Market St.
Georgetown, DE 19947
Phone: (302) 856-5353

Or visit the Attorney General's website:
<http://www.state.de.us/attgen/>

AVOID CHARITIES FRAUD

TIPS ON CHARITABLE GIVING



STATE OF DELAWARE
DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

**Fraud and Consumer
Protection Division**

10 Questions to ask about Charity Fraud

Attorney General M. Jane Brady and the Consumer Protection Unit of the Attorney General's Office offer the following information for individuals considering charitable giving:

How do I know if a charitable or fraternal organization is legitimate?

1. Ask questions of the individual soliciting for a charitable/fraternal organization, and obtain information in writing. Find out the name of the charity, their address and their physical location. Ask to have the charity mail information to you to review before making a commitment to give. Many bogus charities use names that are very similar to legitimate charities in hopes that individuals will not follow through and check into their true identity. Legitimate charitable organizations are happy to provide you with all of the information you'll need to make an informed giving decision.

Can professional solicitors call on behalf of an organization?

2. Professional solicitors are permitted to make calls on behalf of an organization, provided that they disclose that the person soliciting the contribution is, or is employed by, a professional solicitor.

What if the person refuses to give his or her name?

3. The failure of any person to identify himself or herself, by name, prior to making a charitable solicitation, is an unlawful practice.

How can I find out how much money the charity is actually receiving from my contribution?

4. Delaware law provides that upon request, professional solicitors must disclose the amount, or the percentage, of the contribution that will actually be turned over to the charity.

I receive calls from people saying they represent police or firefighters. I've never heard of these organizations. Do they benefit local agencies?

5. The terms "police," "law enforcement," "trooper," "rescue squad," or "firefighter" may not be used unless the person making the representation is employed by a bona fide law enforcement agency, and is authorized to engage in charitable solicitation, or the entity has written authorization from a bona fide law enforcement agency. Again, it is important that you request written information which shows an address, telephone number and location to insure your donation reaches the organization you want to support.

When can solicitors call?

6. Charitable/fraternal organizations, and their solicitors, are permitted to call only between the hours of 8 a.m. and 9 p.m.

Is there a local agency that can provide me with information about charitable organizations in this state?

7. Yes. The Delaware Association of Non-Profit Agencies (DANA) is an excellent resource. They are located at 100 W. 10th St., Suite 102, Wilmington, DE 19801. Their phone number is 302-777-5500.

What should I do when I receive bills or invoices indicating that I have made a pledge to a charitable/fraternal organization that I have never heard of?

8. Do not pay any invoice from an organization that you do not recall having promised a contribution. Please send the invoices, along with your name, address and phone number to the Attorney General's Office, Consumer Protection Unit, 820 N. French St., Wilmington, DE 19801. Also, you may make a complaint with the U.S. Postal Inspector, P.O. Box 10607, Wilmington, DE 19850. The Attorney General is constantly monitoring these types of false invoice scams and welcomes your information.

I receive a lot of charitable/fraternal solicitations over the internet. Is this a safe way to make contributions?

9. The internet is widely used by legitimate organizations, as well as those that are not legitimate. As with any decision involving your finances, you need to have as much information as possible, and assure yourself that your contribution aids the type of organization you wish to support. It is always a good practice to have written materials. A slick looking website is not a substitute for careful research into the organization and their reputation.

If an organization has a non-profit status with the IRS am I assured that it is a legitimate charity?

10. NO. The non-profit status tells you nothing about the legitimacy of an organization. You are better off contributing to charities and fraternal organizations with which you are familiar.